

Message Text

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TO USMISSION NATO

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SUBJECT: NATO HYDROFOIL FAST PATROL CRAFT -

-- GUIDED MISSILE (NATO PHM)

REF: USNATO 922

1. IN DEVELOPING THE FY 1977 BUDGET THE NAVY DECIDED THAT, BECAUSE OF FISCAL CONSTRAINTS, IT WOULD REQUEST NO FURTHER PHMS BEYOND THE FIVE SHIP PRODUCTION PROGRAM ALREADY AUTHORIZED BY CONGRESS. TOGETHER WITH THE LEAD SHIP, PEGASUS (PHM-1), THESE SHIPS WOULD CONSTITUTE A SIX SHIP PHM SQUADRON. THE OSD PRODUCTION DECISION WILL BE MADE ON COMPLETION OF THE PHM-1 T AND E PROGRAM THIS SUMMER. THE GOVERNMENT OF ITALY (GOI) STATED AS EARLY AS 1974 THAT THEY WERE NOT PLANNING TO ENTER PHM PRODUCTION. THE FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF GERMANY (FRG) IS STILL INTERESTED IN UP TO 10 PHMS WITH A PRODUCTION DECISION PRESENTLY
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UNDER ACTIVE CONSIDERATION. BOTH COUNTRIES ARE FULLY

AWARE OF THE CURRENT U.S. PRODUCTION PLAN.

2. THE NAVY ORIGINALLY PLANNED TO BUILD A LARGER FORCE, BUT INCREASES IN SHIPBUILDING COSTS AND A RESULTING KEEN COMPETITION AMONG ALL SHIP TYPES FOR AVAILABLE FUNDS FORCED CURTAILMENT OF THE PHM PROGRAM. DESPITE THIS,

HOWEVER, THE NAVY CONTINUES TO BELIEVE THE PHM CLASS WILL INTRODUCE IMPORTANT NEW CAPABILITIES TO THE FLEET AND THAT THESE CAPABILITIES CAN BE EFFECTIVELY DEMONSTRATED BY AN OPERATIONAL SQUADRON OF SIX SHIPS. THE U.S. NOT ONLY HAS AN INTEREST IN THE PHM AS AN ELEMENT OF THE U.S. NAVY, BUT ALSO AS A CONTRIBUTOR TO NATO SEAPOWER. THIS SHIP WITH ITS SUPERIOR SPEED, SEAKEEPING AND FIREPOWER CAN SIGNIFICANTLY ENHANCE NATO NAVAL STRENGTH, AND WILL BE ABLE TO EXERT A NAVAL INFLUENCE AT SEA IN WATERS OF CRUCIAL STRATEGIC IMPORTANCE TO THE ALLIANCE.

3. YOUR RESPONSE TO POSSIBLE INQUIRIES RESULTING FROM THE REUTER'S NEW RELEASE SHOULD EMPHASIZE (1) THE U.S. PLANS FOR A FULL SQUADRON OF SIX PHMS, (2) GOI AND FRG AWARENESS OF THE U.S. PRODUCTION PLANS, (3) THE PHM AS A NOTABLE EXAMPLE OF NATO COOPERATIVE EFFORT AND STANDARDIZATION AND (4) THE OPERATIONAL VALUE OF THIS INNOVATIVE SHIP TO NATO NAVAL STRENGTH.

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